

# Department of Human Services

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## Articles in Today's Clips Friday, July 20, 2007

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<u>TOPIC</u>	<u>PAGE</u>
Child Abuse/Neglect/Protection	2-5
Foster Care	6-7
Health Care	8-11
Juvenile Justice	12-14
Adult Foster Care	15
Federal Budget	16-17

\*Important story at this spot



## Marshall man arraigned in death of girl, 4

July 20, 2007

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

MARSHALL, Mich.— A man has been arraigned on charges stemming from the death of a 4-year-old girl who died from suspected head injuries, police say.

Chadwick Leon Damon, 20, of Marshall, was arrested Wednesday and was being held in the Calhoun County Jail. He was charged with open murder and first-degree child abuse.

The child, Mackenzie VandenHeede of Marshall, was the daughter of Damon's girlfriend.

The abuse charge stems from a July 4 incident during which Damon is accused of breaking Mackenzie's arm. Damon has no previous criminal record. An autopsy was performed Thursday at Sparrow Hospital in Lansing, but results were not released.

"There was some bruising on the child that did not appear normal," Mike Olson, Marshall's public safety director, told the Battle Creek Enquirer.

Damon's preliminary hearing was scheduled for July 30.

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# Calhoun County man faces charges in death of 4-year-old

WOOD-TV

Updated: July 20, 2007 08:41 AM EDT

**CALHOUN COUNTY** -- He's accused of killing his four-year-old daughter, and now a Calhoun County man is facing charges.

Chad Damon was arraigned Thursday on a charge of first degree child abuse. Police say that charge is related to the child's death.

The child was found unresponsive last Thursday in the home she and her mother shared with the suspect. The child passed away on Tuesday. Police say she had bruises on several parts of her body.

Investigators are waiting for the results of an autopsy conducted Thursday.

# STURGIS JOURNAL

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## Mother's case to continue

Print Page

By Corky Emrick  
Sturgis Journal

CENTREVILLE - The preliminary hearing for a 37-year-old Sturgis woman being held in connection with her 15-year-old son's death will continue with more testimony Aug. 1.

Teresa LeaAnn Kleine is charged with one count manslaughter, one count first-degree child abuse and three counts delivery of marijuana.

The charges stem from the death of her son, Daniel Jacob Shepherd, on April 28.

The case is being prosecuted by assistant prosecutor John McDonough. Kleine is represented by John Bush.

St. Joseph County District Court Judge William Welty began to hear testimony Thursday. Welty heard from several teenagers who were with Shepherd the night before he died.

Testimony was given that several teens were in the home on the night of April 27 at 201 1/2 Jefferson St., where they smoked marijuana.

Witnesses told the court Kleine was present in the room while they smoked.

One witness said Shepherd appeared "very high" and said he kept nodding off and was breathing very deeply.

Evidence was also presented that Shepherd took \$50 to buy the marijuana. The group smoked marijuana to celebrate his birthday. Several other witnesses gave similar testimony about smoking marijuana and their concern for Shepherd.

Several of the witnesses said that after her son's body was removed from the home, she gave the teens the rest of the marijuana.

"Jake would have wanted you to have it," one witness said Kleine told them.

Another said they smoked the rest in memory of Jake.

The final witness of the day was Sturgis Police officer Bill Lentz, who was at the scene when Shepherd was found.

Lentz said they were called to the home around 8 a.m. for an unresponsive 15-year-old. He said they found the boy's body just inside the door in the living room.

"It was obvious that he was deceased," Lentz said.

Lentz estimated Shepherd had been dead for between four and six hours.

Lentz also testified to statements that Kleine had made during his investigation.

Kleine had told him that her son had a party, but it broke up early because he didn't feel well. No mention of the marijuana was made.

Lentz said Kleine told him Shepherd had been diagnosed with a cyst on the brain. He also

said Kleine told him she was a recovering methamphetamine addict and was taking methadone and antidepressants.

She told police some of the medicine was missing and that she hid it in a closet.

When testimony ended for the day, a bond hearing was held.

Kleine is being held in the St. Joseph County Jail with a \$4,000 10 percent bond on these charges. She has a bond of \$10,000 on a probation violation charge. Welty said the \$4,000 seemed low and upped her bond to \$20,000 cash or surety.

McDonough had asked for bond of \$100,000.

The charge of maintaining a drug house has also been added to her charges.

"It's always difficult to charge a mother with the death of her own child," St. Joseph County Prosecutor Doug Fisher said. "We know no mother would do that purposely. In this case it was obvious that this child needed medical attention and her failure to get it, unfortunately, resulted in his death," Fisher said.

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[Back](#)

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Article published Jul 20, 2007  
Parents protest foster care bill  
Privatization measure debated in state Senate  
Susan Vela  
Lansing State Journal

LANSING — The group was small but hoped it was persuasive.

A handful of foster care parents and their children gathered Wednesday outside the Capitol to protest legislation that would hand 20 percent more of Michigan's foster care system to the private sector.

"I cannot believe they're trying to change this," said Hemlock resident Laura Woods of Saginaw County. She has adopted three foster kids.

Senate Bill 232 could save the state up to \$19 million, but that would come at the expense of at least 300 jobs held by state human services workers relating directly with more than 18,000 foster care children.

Everyone involved in the debate is concerned about kids. The bill's supporters say the legislation would leave the state with more time to do oversight work. The bill's opponents fear change and the private sector's ability to manage more foster care cases.

Right now, Michigan's foster care system is a network of administrators, caseworkers, therapists and others handling the recruitment, training and licensing of foster families, along with therapy and case management services. Forty percent of the Michigan Department of Human Services' foster care responsibilities already are privatized.

With children on the line, some can't help but fear change.

Foster care parent Kim Rowan is concerned about the increased caseloads for state Department of Human Services employees, which the agency confirmed could jump from 20 to 30.

Almost every state in the nation has privatized some of its foster care system, experts say. The legislation, proposed by state Sen. Bill Hardiman, R-Kentwood, would raise Michigan's privatization level to 60 percent.

Hardiman said that his bill, if approved, would give the state more time for oversight. Also, all private sector agencies would have to be accredited on a national level and they would receive pay based on their care, he said.

In Ingham County, three private sector agencies - Child & Family Services, Capital Area; St. Vincent Catholic Charities; and Lutheran Social Services - are now managing foster care cases.

Child & Family Services manages 150 of the tri-county's 1,000-plus caseload.

"The bill, first of all, would only expand what we're doing successfully," said Jim Paparella, Child & Family Services' executive director. "If we take a good thing and expand it, wouldn't that make it greater?"

He emphasized that all the private agencies would have to be nonprofits under Hardiman's bill.

State money, though, can amount to hundreds of thousands of dollars.

Paparella said the most recent monthly payment for Child & Family Services was about \$60,000 for 50 specialized care foster kids and about \$5,700 for about 100 general care foster kids.

His agency manages the case of Shannon Baker's 18-year-old foster son. The family lives in Dimondale.

Baker's only concern is that more agencies would want to enter the realm of foster care if the bill were passed and the agencies might become so different in their styles that parents will not confidently know which to pick.

"My No. 1 concern is really just the children and whatever is in their best interests," Baker said.

Wednesday's small group of protesters marched around the Capitol carrying signs that read "Vote No!," "Children are More than Money," and "Don't Use Experiments With Our Children."

They caught the attention of several state legislators, including state Rep. Joan Bauer, D-Lansing, who stopped by to ask a few questions.

Bauer has long been concerned about privatizing services.

"Often, it sounds like it will save money," Bauer said. "(Yet) it often ends up costing taxpayers more in the long run."

She backed her argument with documents from a union-focused group detailing privatization's failures. One example was of the Michigan Department of Transportation privatizing some paving work and then ending up paying double what it would have cost if the state had done the work.

Contact Susan Vela at 702-4248 or [svela@lsj.com](mailto:svela@lsj.com).

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Published July 20, 2007

#### About MI Child

- Eligible: Families making 150 percent to 200 percent of the poverty line
- Price: \$10 a month/family
- Coverage includes: Regular checkups, shots, emergency care, dental care, pharmacy, hospital care, vision and hearing, mental health and substance abuse services
- More information: Call (888) 988-6300 or visit <https://eform.state.mi.us/michild/intro1.htm>

#### At a glance

- A bill to provide more funding for the State Children's Health Insurance Program is headed to a full Senate vote. The program provides funding for MIChild, which provides health insurance for eligible children and childless adults.

The funding would provide:

- \$35 billion added to SCHIP
- \$210 million to Michigan
- Coverage for 3.2 million more children nationally
- Coverage for 90,000 more children in Michigan

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## Kids health care bill clears hurdle

Senate panel OKs plan that would add 90,000 children to MIChild rolls

Seth Roy

Lansing State Journal

Michigan would add about 90,000 children to MICHild, a government subsidized health care program, based on a bill that cleared a U.S. Senate committee Thursday.

MICHild would receive \$210 million next year under the proposal, said Sen. Debbie Stabenow, D-Lansing.

The state currently provides insurance to more than 33,000 children and 64,000 childless adults whose families aren't eligible for Medicaid, but who can't afford insurance.

For \$10 a month, children in the program receive regular checkups, emergency care, dental and vision care, and medications, state Department of Health spokesperson James McCurtis said.

For the current fiscal year, the state is spending \$41.3 million for MICHild, with \$28.7 million coming from federal money, McCurtis said.

"We're talking about taking care of one our most vulnerable citizens," he said.

The Senate bill would provide \$35 billion in funding over the next five years to the State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP) by adding 61 cents to the federal cigarette tax. The program already has \$25 billion in funding.

The bill will be presented to the entire Senate for a vote within the next two weeks, Stabenow said.

A similar bill also must pass in the House, before it goes to President Bush.

Even though the issue has received bipartisan support in Senate, with a 17-4 vote in committee, Bush has vowed to veto it, stating it would be a step toward federal health care.

"I think there is something wrong in our country when we are spending \$12 billion a month in Iraq," Stabenow said. "And our president is not okay with spending \$7 billion a year (to cover children.)"

Stabenow said she believes Congress will be able to overturn a veto.

Bush has proposed a \$4.8 billion increase spread over five years, which would cause SCHIP to operate at a deficit by the fifth year.

With the committee's proposal, the extra \$7 billion each year would allow for 3.2 million more children to be covered in the United States. It currently covers 6.6 million.

About 3 million children would still be left without insurance, Stabenow said. She added that if she had her way, the bill would have added enough money to cover every eligible child in the nation.

"My preference would be to be funding this at a full \$50 billion, but given our realities," she said, "I was pleased we were able to come up with a true compromise."

McCurtis said any extra money would improve health coverage.

In the state, many different insurance companies carry MICHild, including Blue Cross Blue Shield, Priority Health and more.

An issue facing the state, and the MICHild program, is reaching out to children, said Sheryl Lowe, director of public policy and social mission at Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan.

"One of the difficulties is finding the kids who are eligible," she said. "We're committed to increasing access to health care coverage for all of Michigan's residents."

Stabenow said MIChild affects primarily working parents who don't make enough money to insure their children.

"In many cases, it's a single mom not only working one, but two, jobs," she said.

Contact Seth Roy at 377-1206 or [sroy@lsj.com](mailto:sroy@lsj.com).

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---

Article published Jul 20, 2007

Health care plan could cover more Mich. uninsured children  
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — An additional 90,000 children in Michigan without health insurance could be eligible for coverage under a measure being considered in the Senate.

Sen. Debbie Stabenow, D-Lansing, said Thursday that the state stands to receive about \$210 million a year — an increase of about \$60 million annually — to expand its children's health care program, called MICHild, under a bill approved by the Senate Finance Committee.

The program, which is part of the State Children's Health Insurance Program, or SCHIP, was designed to provide health coverage for children of the working poor.

The bill, which may be considered next week by the Senate, faces an uncertain future. President Bush on Wednesday threatened to veto the measure, which would expand the program by levying a 61-cent-a-pack increase in the federal excise tax on cigarettes.

The program covered more than 118,000 children in Michigan in 2006, along with about 100,000 adults who received a limited package of benefits. About 170,000 children in Michigan do not have health insurance.

About 30 Battle Creek students on Wednesday marched in support of the program.

Stabenow said the funding could help Michigan reach out to 90,000 children who do not have health insurance.

"In the greatest country in the world, we need to make sure that children of moms and dads who are working hard in low-wage jobs have the health care that they need," Stabenow said in a conference call with reporters.

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## Nate warns Pontiac kids

Of The Oakland Press

Nathaniel Abraham signed autographs after giving a speech to more than 100 children saying that if they didn't listen to their parents and teachers they would end up like he did - incarcerated.

Twenty or more children huddled around Abraham after the speech, handing him pens and paper and asking for his autograph Thursday evening inside the Holland Community Center in Pontiac.

"I just want to be an example of what not to do," said Abraham, 21, who fatally shot Ronnie Greene Jr. with a rifle in 1997 outside a Pontiac party store. "I'm living proof of what will happen to you if you don't listen to your parents. You'll end up incarcerated like me."

Abraham was convicted of second-degree murder and sentenced as a juvenile. At the time of his arrest, Abraham was one of the youngest persons in the United States ever to be tried as an adult on first-degree murder charges.

Abraham, who declined one-on-one media interviews after the speech, told the crowd he was there for the children and said he wants to be an inspiration for keeping on the straight and narrow.

Patricia Rush, 49, of Pontiac brought a group of children to the gathering in hopes that some of Abraham's message to stay in school and avoid trouble would rub off on them.

"I just want his signature on something," said Rush. "I have a daughter doing time and I have her back. I know about prison life. I hope these kids will learn to avoid it."

Nichole Edwards, 33, the sister of Ronnie Greene, came down to hear what Abraham had to say. Edwards said she saw Abraham's message to the kids as one of hope.

"A lot of youth can relate to somebody who has been there," Edwards said. "I don't think that him being here says it's OK to kill. I don't think that is what it is about. It's about teaching a lesson."

The speech was Abraham's first appearance in Pontiac since his January release from the juvenile justice system.

Television crews waited after the speech for an interview session but left when it became apparent that Abraham wasn't going to speak further.

Aaron Dorkins, 16, a Pontiac Central High School student, said he hoped some of the kids in the audience would learn from the experience.

"It's important that he comes here so that kids can understand what he did and learn from it," Dorkins said. "I don't think this glorifies what he did. This shows you can learn from your mistakes. That is why it's called a second chance."

Quincy Stewart, who also spoke at the gathering, acknowledged that Greene's death should never be forgotten. Stewart also said it was the "white media" that demonized Abraham and he also blamed the system for singling out the black man for incarceration.

Stewart is a longtime supporter of Abraham.

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## Nathaniel Abraham Speaks To Youth

POSTED: 1:24 pm EDT July 19, 2007

UPDATED: 7:16 am EDT July 20, 2007

**PONTIAC, Mich.** -- The youngest person ever to be convicted of murder in Michigan will be speaking to young adults about making positive life choices Thursday night.

Nathaniel Abraham, 21, will speak publicly for the first time since he was released from the juvenile justice system in January.

Abraham was convicted of second-degree murder as a juvenile.

When Abraham was 11 years old, he was convicted of fatally shooting Ronnie Greene Jr. with a rifle in 1997 outside a Pontiac party store.

Abraham's sister, Michelle Peoples-Dudley said he wants to make sure young people don't make the same mistake he made.

Abraham will be speaking about the murder case that thrust him into the national spotlight, life choices and his budding music career.

The event is free to the public and begins at 6:30 p.m. Wednesday at the Holland Center in Pontiac.

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### RELATED TO STORY



**Video:** Nathaniel Abraham Uncut



## Worker accused of molestation

Friday, July 20, 2007

**The Grand Rapids Press**

ALLEGAN COUNTY -- A 22-year-old caretaker is accused of molesting a mentally disabled resident at the Cornerstone Adult Foster Care facility in southern Allegan County.

The county Sheriff's Department and the state began investigating after a resident told employees of the alleged improper touching, authorities said.

The alleged victim is about 50 years old, and the incident reportedly occurred last month, police said.

The suspect, a Benton Harbor man, is scheduled to be arraigned Monday on charges of second-degree criminal sexual conduct.

Investigators were trying to determine if other residents have been molested.

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Article published Jul 20, 2007

House passes increases for education and health programs

ANDREW TAYLOR

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — A bill filled with money for job training, health and education faces a veto from President Bush, who complains that Democratic add-ons have made it too expensive.

Some of the president's fellow Republicans, worried about re-election, say it's actually too skimpy.

The bill, containing \$152 billion for social programs including special education, community health centers, Head Start and health research, easily passed the House on Thursday by a 276-140 vote.

The tally wouldn't be big enough to overcome a promised veto from the White House, which calls it "irresponsible and excessive" for busting Bush's budget by almost \$13 billion.

That's hardly a sentiment universally shared by House Republicans, who took to the floor over the past three days to complain of inadequate funding for special education, health research and literacy promotion, among other programs. The Senate has yet to act on companion legislation.

Rep. Michael Castle, a moderate Republican from Delaware, chided Democrats for increasing by less than 3 percent the funding for health research by the National Institutes of Health.

"The amount ... would be almost the smallest increase for NIH in 38 years," Castle complained. "New research opportunities will go unfunded. The number of new therapies will continue to decline."

Perhaps no other bill better defines the ongoing wrestling match over spending between Bush and Democrats controlling Congress. As they press ahead with the 12 spending bills for agency budgets and programs funded by Congress each year, Democrats are adding about \$23 billion to Bush's budget, about a 5 percent increase for nonsecurity related domestic programs.

The 125-page bill — accompanied by a 429-page report — weaves increases long-sought by Democrats into programs within the departments of Labor, Health and Human Services and Education such as child care for the poor, the Healthy Start programs combating infant mortality and a \$390 increase in the maximum Pell Grant for low-income college students. To build GOP support, there's a big boost for abstinence education.

The health and education measure passed Thursday consumed about half of Democrats' planned increases for domestic programs, providing increases for heating subsidies for the poor, rural health care, family planning and grants for local schools.

"This bill, more than any other, determines how willing we are to make the investments necessary to assure the future strength of our country and its working families," said its principal author, House Appropriations Committee Chairman David Obey, D-Wis.

Moderate Republicans, often from swing districts, pressed for more.

"Increased federal special education funding is critically important," said Rep. Mike Ferguson, R-N.J., who succeeded Wednesday in adding \$50 million to the special education budget.

Rep. Vernon Ehlers, R-Grand Rapids, a physicist by training, won an additional \$16 million Wednesday for a program to improve training of math and science teachers.

Bush has stepped up his criticism of Democrats' budgetary moves in recent weeks, including a Thursday speech in Nashville, Tenn., in which he promised to kill Democrats' efforts to add to his budget. He argues that the domestic add-ons, totaling \$205 billion over the next five years, will inevitably result in higher taxes.

"If they overspend or if they try to raise your taxes, I'm going to veto their bills," Bush said.

Bush and his Republican allies on Capitol Hill are fighting the Democrats' plans for budget hikes, reaching out to core GOP voters disaffected with their party's handling of the budget in recent years.

Thursday's debate was largely consumed by amendments by GOP conservatives futilely attempting to shave money from the legislation. The amendments were swatted down in later votes.

Rep. John Campbell, R-Calif., offered a plan to shave every account in the bill by 0.25 percent but lost by a 177-245 vote.

“Is that going to mean the end of the world as we know it?” Campbell asked. “Is that going to mean that this program is devastated?”

While the numbers sound large overall, lawmakers scrutinizing individual accounts found plenty of holes they wanted to fill.

“Yes, this bill spends \$10 billion more on our kids, on our workers, on our obligation to provide access to health care to people who don’t have it than the president does,” Obey said. “I would do three times as much if I could.”

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